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## 1850 August 12 - Whiting Report, Surveyor General's Report to Governor of California

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## Surveyor General's Report.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY,  
The Governor of the State.

SIR: Section 9<sup>th</sup> of an Act regulating the Duties of my Office, makes it incumbent on me to report to you upon various subjects; in compliance with which, I have the honor to submit the following:

I have not been called upon by law to make any surveys, nor have I received sufficient data from the County Surveyors, or from other sources, to make even an approximation to a correct map of the State.

I deem it unnecessary to make any plans or suggestions for the improvement of the internal Navigation of the State, as it is not probable that this State will undertake any such improvements at present.

I know of but one method of planting and preserving forests of timber trees; viz: put the seeds in the ground and protect the shoots by a fence or ditch. As regards draining and the prevention of overflows and navigation, they can all be better done by private than public enterprises, and I have no doubt that when the lands fit for cultivation without such outlay, shall be occupied, that our marshes will be drained.

There is no land that I can hear of belonging to the State. By a recent Act of Congress, the overflowed lands of the different States were granted to the States, but do not become their property until surveyed by the General Government.

Not having received any reports from the Assessors, I am unable to give any reliable information as to the quantity of arable land within the State, or the number of horses, cattle, etc. I am not aware of any disease having diminished the agricultural productions of the State. The Grasshopper has been very destructive in some localities; and as a preventative, I would recommend the extensive introduction of Turkeys.

I have no means of ascertaining the quantity of mineral lands within the State. The amount of gold produced is probably from three to four millions a month.

But few of the County Surveyors have reported, and the notes and plans sent in are nearly useless, being detached surveys which it is impossible to locate. I would therefore suggest the propriety of locating one or more points in each County, by longitude and latitude, with which the County Surveyors could correct their work. In that way their surveys would be of use in making a map of the State, and would probably, during the coming year, furnish data sufficient to make a much better map than can be obtained in any other way.

The surveys of the County Surveyors will mostly be of the old Spanish grants; their connexion in one general map would probably show that there is still a large portion of the good land in the State not covered by said grants; a knowledge of which would be of great advantage to our people, enabling them to locate on land from which they would not be driven, and which they would therefore improve and cultivate.

The great drawback to agricultural interest in this State is the uncertainty of the land titles. In all other respects there is no State in the Union which offers the same inducements to the farmer. Most of the valley lands will produce one crop a year

(without irrigation), equal, if not superior, to any in the Atlantic States. Our distance from all other agricultural counties affords us ample protection, and will ensure the farmer of a good price for his produce; while the geographical position of our State and its mineral wealth will cause the majority of our people to turn their attention to mining and commerce: thereby creating a home market for our farmers.

All that California requires to enable her to furnish all the necessities and most of the comforts of life is, that the land titles should become settled, so that our people could know that they possessed a home, and could reap the full benefit of their labors; then a large number of our people would really become citizens of California, and furnish a balance-wheel for the floating population which we must have for years to come.

Very respectfully,  
Your obedient servant,

CHAS T. WHITING,  
Surveyor-General.

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NAPA CITY, CALIFORNIA, *August* 12, 1850.

To CHAS. J. WHITING, ESQ.,  
Surveyor-General, State of California.

Dear Sir: In accordance with the Act regulating the duties of your office, and that of County Surveyors and Assessors, we beg leave to submit the following:

The first matter to which we would call your attention, is that of internal improvement.

The navigation of Napa river is rendered exceedingly dangerous by the numerous snags imbedded in the channel: so much loss has already attended the navigation, that the citizens of this County have taken measures to have the snags removed four feet below low watermark, which, by many persons who are familiar with the river, is thought will be amply sufficient to ensure safety to vessels drawing eight feet of water. We think that the entire snag should be removed, which can only be done by the Legislature appropriating about \$3,000 for that purpose.

In the next place allow us to suggest that some assistance is given us by the State for the construction of a Plank Road from Napa City to the north end of the Valley, about thirty miles. Travel is sufficient to warrant the belief that the stock or the road would pay for itself in a short time.

The nature of the soil forbids the idea of a firm road otherwise, and no one doubts but a Plank Road would be attended with less expense than a Macadamized one. The material for the first is convenient and cheap, whereas for the other no rock suitable could be found in many miles.

So far as the actual surveys go, nothing can be definitely learned respecting the quantity of land belonging to the State in this County; but we are of the opinion that there is but little. The greater part of the land in the Valley is fine tillable soil, and there is but five miles that is not under cultivation.

There is about fifty thousand bushels of barley, ten thousand bushels of wheat, one hundred thousand cabbage, and ten thousand bushels potatoes raised in the Valley, besides many of the finest melons to be found anywhere.

The agricultural resources are as great as of any other County in the State.

There are near fifty thousand horses and cattle, and about three thousand sheep.

The citizens this season have turned their attention to improving their lands, by erecting suitable dwelling-houses, etc., etc., which gives our County quite a thriving appearance. The County Seat, Napa City, has doubled in population and number of houses during the past four months, and still continues to improve, which will soon make it a place of considerable importance.

When the snags from the river are known to be no longer dangerous, our shipping will increase no inconsiderable.

With respect,  
Your obedient servant,

JOEL P. WALKER, Assessor,  
JNO. E. BROWN, County Surveyor.

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SANTA CRUZ, *December 2*, 1851.

To the Surveyor-General,  
CHAS J. WHITING, ESQ.

Sir: From the very limited means of information that I possess, I have compiled the following brief report on those matters connected with "Section 9," of the "Act concerning the office of the Surveyor-General," to which you called my attention in your circular letter of May last. As regards the subject matter of the third division, section 9<sup>th</sup>, I have had no means, thus far, of forming even an approximate estimate as to the aggregate quantity of land belonging to the State in this County, owing to the multiplicity of Spanish claims and *permits* located in the County, the validity of which have not been determined. Of the "4<sup>th</sup> division of section 9<sup>th</sup>," a great proportion of the untimbered lands in the County are adapted to both tillage and grazing. Of the "5<sup>th</sup> division of section 9<sup>th</sup>," the following estimate of the number of horses, cattle, sheep, and swine, in the County, being compiled mostly from the Assessor's roll, is, probably, nearly correct: horses, 1,125; cattle, 18,300; sheep, 1,100; swine, 375. Of the "6<sup>th</sup> division, section 9<sup>th</sup>," I have no data whatever from which to estimate the quantity of wheat, rye, maize,

potatoes, etc., raised in the County during the present year. Of the 7<sup>th</sup> division of section 9<sup>th</sup>, I have no knowledge of any mineral lands whatever within the County.

Very respectfully, yours.

EDW. B. KELLOGG,  
County Surveyor.